

REMARKS

Claims 1, 13, 14 and 15 have been amended and claims 2, 16 and 17 canceled to improve the clarity of the claimed subject matter and to bring the claims into conformity with U.S. Practice and format, and to place the application fully in condition for allowance. All of the amendments are fully supported by the original disclosure of this application and therefore do not constitute the introduction of any new matter into this case.

Applicants have not yet received an indication from the Examiner as to the acceptability of the originally filed drawings and requests such indication in the next Official Action, in the absence of which it is assumed that the original drawings are acceptable.

Claims 1, 3-15 and 18-20 remain pending upon entry of the amendments to the claims above.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all of the elements of canceled claims 2, 16 and 17. Therefore, it is believed that independent claim 1 is now in condition for allowance, as well as the remaining dependent claims. Dependent claims 14 and 15 have been amended for proper antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 7 and 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Claims 4-6, 8-10 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

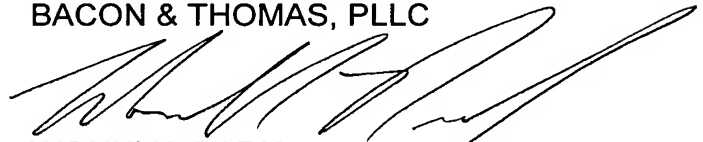
As previously indicated, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate

Serial No.: 10/092,428
Group Art Unit: 2874
Examiner: Ellen E. KIM

all of the elements of allowable claim 17. Therefore, it is believed that independent claim 1, as presently amended, is now in condition for allowance, as well as all of its dependent claims. In view of the amendments to independent claim 1, the cancellation of claims 2, 16 and 17, and the remarks above, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims based on 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103 is respectfully requested.

In the event there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application which can be resolved by a telephone call or facsimile communication to Applicant's Attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone or facsimile at the numbers provided below.

Respectfully submitted,
BACON & THOMAS, PLLC



WONKI K. PARK
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 38,991

Date: January 6, 2004

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC
625 Slaters Lane, Fourth Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: 703-683-0500
Facsimile: 703-683-1080

WP/jfm

S:\Producer\wp\LEE 092428\amendment.wpd